

## REMARKS

The Applicants hereby provisionally elect Species 4 which corresponds to the fourth embodiment described on page 86, line 18 to page 92, line 21 of the specification and in Figure 4. Claims 1-3 and 8 read on the provisionally elected species.

Figures 1-2, 4, 6, 8-9, 11, 16, 42 and 46 correspond to species 1-2, 4, 6, 8-9, 11, 16, 24 and 26, respectively, which correspond to embodiments 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 24 and 26, respectively. The Applicants respectfully submit that Figures 1-2, 4, 6, 8-9, 11, 16, 42 and 46 (embodiments 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 24 and 26) are not patentably distinct for the following reasons, and therefore the Applicants respectfully traverse the species election requirement.

The present invention includes claims 1-49. Independent claims 1, 8, 17, 21, 25 and 34 are directed to an image coding apparatus. Independent claims 5, 12, 20, 23, 27 and 35 are directed to an image decoding apparatus. Independent claims 36-37, 39, 41 and 42 are directed to a character collation apparatus.

Independent claims 1, 8, 21 and 25 directed to the image coding apparatus correspond to embodiments 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 24 and 26, which, as described above, are illustrated in Figures 1-2, 4, 6, 8-9, 11, 16, 42 and 46, respectively. The inventions defined in independent claims 1, 8, 21 and 25 include features which are common to each of independent claims 1, 8, 21 and 25. Namely, the inventions of independent claims 1, 8, 21 and 25 each recite a common feature of generating image data of the predicative image corresponding to a target image to be coded, on the basis of image feature data indicating the feature of the target image, and subjecting the image data of the target image to entropy encoding by utilizing the generated image data of the predictive image.

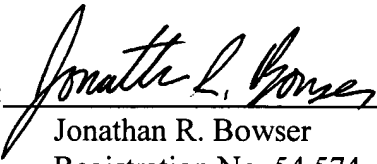
These common features are disclosed in Figures 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 42 and 46, which each clearly illustrate the elements recited in claim 8. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that claim 8 is a generic claim. Therefore, if claim 8 is found to be allowable and even if the Examiner does not withdraw the species election requirement, the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 21 and 25, as well as the claims depending therefrom, are entitled to examination.

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicants respectfully traverse the species election requirement and respectfully request the Examiner to examine at least each of claims 1-4, 8-11, 13, 15, 21-22, 25-26, 29, 31, 33, 44-45 and 47 which read on species 1-2, 4, 6, 8-9, 11, 16, 24 and 26 (embodiments 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 24 and 26) and which are illustrated in Figures 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 42 and 46.

A full examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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